

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Alabama Department of Public Safety

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### **DPS Commemorates AMBER Alert Awareness Day on Jan. 13**

MONTGOMERY – Alabama is among states nationwide that are joining together Friday, Jan. 13, to mark the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AMBER Alert program and to commend its mission of locating and safely recovering abducted and endangered children.

In Alabama, 18 AMBER Alerts have been issued through the state's Emergency Alert System since the state's AMBER Alert program became operational in May 2003. Alabama's program is conducted in partnership with the Alabama Broadcasters Association, the Department of Public Safety, local law enforcement agencies and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

"When it comes to the safe recovery of abducted and endangered children, AMBER Alert has proven itself again and again," said Col. Hugh B. McCall, director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety. In such situations, time is of the essence, and the program's capacity to get identifying information out quickly and to as many people possible is key to its success.

Before an AMBER Alert is issued, five criteria must be met: Law enforcement must confirm that a child has been abducted; the child must be younger than 18; circumstances must indicate to law enforcement that the child is endangered; there must be enough available descriptive information about the child, the suspected abductor and/or the abductor's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help in locating the child; and the child's information must be entered into the National Crime Information Center Database.

AMBER Alert began in 1996, when 9-year-old Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas, was kidnapped and brutally murdered near her home. The program evolved from a local network of radio broadcasters to include programs in all 50 states.

Beginning in 2007, e-mail notice of AMBER and Missing Child Alerts in Alabama became available to individual subscribers. Since that time, more than 2,000 individuals have signed up to receive electronic notifications. Anyone who wishes to receive these e-mails may complete an online application at [dps.alabama.gov/community](http://dps.alabama.gov/community).

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